

REMARKS

INTRODUCTION:

In accordance with the foregoing, claims 1, 10, 31, 48-49 and 53-54 have been amended. Claims 1, 8-14, 31-32, 38-54 and 59-61 are pending and under consideration. Claims 8,9 and 59-61 are allowed. Claims 31, 32, 46, 47, 51 and 52 are objected to.

REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §§102 and 103:

The rejections based on USSR 1137367 are respectfully traversed.

Independent claim 45 (used herein as an example) recites a centering mechanism to vary the radial distance of the centering protrusions from the center of the non-contacting conveyance equipment. These features are illustrated, for example, in present Figs. 7A and 7B.

The cited reference teaches stops 7. Page 2 of the English translation of the reference states that "the stops prevent lateral displacement of the device with respect to the load." Fig. 3 of the reference teaches that the stops 7 are held in place with a pin or pin-like device. However, neither the written disclosure nor the figures teach that the stops vary in radial distance from the center. The Examiner relies upon Fig. 3 of the reference. Office Action, p. 5, ln. 6-8. However, the Examiner does not specify which elements of Fig. 3 correspond to the claimed feature.

The Examiner further states that the feature of the varied radial distance does not provide any advantage or solve any stated problem. However, the varied radial distance provides a more stable control of the lateral movement of the object.

With respect to dependent claims 39 and 40, the Examiner states that the claimed chamfered edge and concave opening in a tapered shape (claims 39 and 40) do not provide any advantages. However, these features facilitate outflow of air from a concave opening. Present Specification, para. [0038].

The remaining references do not overcome these deficiencies.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejections is requested.

CONCLUSION:

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the

application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

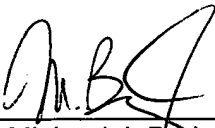
Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: 7-24-06

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